

**Listing of Claims**

1. (currently amended) A computer implemented method for surveying a plurality of users with an a sequence of questions that is automatically tailored per user sequence of questions, comprising the steps of:

5 ~~presenting at least one question from a collection of questions to said user, the user answers to said at least one question determining an affinity of said user to at least one or more affinity groups, wherein each affinity group comprises a plurality of user profiles;~~

10 ~~creating for each of said users a corresponding user profile for said user if a profile does not exist for said user, otherwise accessing an existing profile for said user, and adding said at least one containing a tailored sequence of questions and corresponding answers to said user profile;~~

15 ~~determining if a corresponding affinity group exists for said user profile and, if so, associating said each user profile with at least one or more affinity groups, based on said user's profile questions and corresponding answers, otherwise creating at least one new affinity group and, if an association between a said user profile and said at least one affinity group does not exist, then creating at least one with said new affinity group for said user profile, each affinity group containing at least one user profile;~~

20 ~~presenting each user with a particular subsequent sequence of questions from a source containing a plurality of different questions, said collection sequence of questions to said user, the selection of said subsequent question, and therefore the specific order of each question in which said questions in said collection said sequence of questions are presented to said user, being independently, asynchronously, and dynamically tailored for each and every user on an individual basis determined responsive to both an answer received from each individual user to a question previously presented question to said individual user in said collection of questions and a particular affinity group or combination of affinity groups to which said user a profile of said individual user is associated;~~

~~repeating the steps above until all possible questions of said collection of questions have been presented to and answered by said user; and~~

~~storing said user profile of said each user;~~

~~at least one of the questions being pertinent to at least one of compensation,~~

5 ~~benefits, wages, and economic analysis.~~

2. (cancelled)

3. (cancelled)

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4. (currently amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein said at least one particular subsequent question from said sequence collection of questions is presented because of at least one of:

popularity of said subsequent questions within said particular affinity group

15 or combination of said affinity groups;

as a most frequently answered subsequent question within said particular affinity group or combination of said affinity groups; and

as a most recently answered subsequent question within said particular affinity group or combination of said affinity groups.

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5. (previously presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein at least one question is capable of receiving an answer from said user that comprises an open text.

6. (previously presented) The method of Claim 5, wherein said open text allows

25 said user to add a new answer value for said question.

7. (previously presented) The method of Claim 6, wherein said new answer is used as one of a plurality of possible answers to said question when said question is subsequently posed to a second user.

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8. (previously presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein a question comprises at least two possible answers.

9. (original) The method of Claim 8, wherein said user may select more than one  
5 answer to said question.

10. (previously presented) The method of Claim 8, wherein said at least two possible answers are presented because of at least one of:

10 popularity of an answer within said particular affinity group or combination of said affinity groups;

as a most frequent answer within said particular affinity group or combination of said affinity groups; and

as a most recent answer within said particular affinity group or combination of said affinity groups.

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11. (previously presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein said method further comprises the step of:

filtering said user profile, wherein said filtering comprises the application of a rules engine that compares said user profile to a set of predefined criteria.

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12. (cancelled)

13. (previously presented) The method of Claim 11, wherein said filtering step further comprises the step of:

25 modifying an answer to said question based on at least one of:

predetermined criterion;

at least one filtering rule;

consistency with previously answered questions;

consistency with all answered questions; and

consistency with answers of said particular affinity group or combination of said affinity groups.

14. (previously presented) The method of claim 13, wherein said modification  
5 comprises at least one of omission of said answer, and tagging said user profile  
as inactive.

15. (currently amended) The method of Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:  
10 periodically creating a new affinity group by associating at least one user  
profile to said new affinity group.

16. (cancelled)

17. (cancelled)

15 18. (original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of:  
providing a report.

19. (currently amended) The method of Claim 18, wherein generation of said  
20 report is constrained one or more constraints comprising by at least one of:  
an attribute of said user profile; and  
a reporting goal.

20. (original) The method of Claim 19, wherein said goal comprises at least one  
25 of:  
a profile attribute value;  
a range of profile attribute values;  
a Boolean value reflective of a set of values;  
a Boolean value reflective of a set of non-values;  
30 a date range;

a minimum count of matching profiles;  
a maximum count of matching profiles;  
a question filter;  
an affinity filter; and  
5 a match score threshold.

21. (original) The method of Claim 19, further comprising the step of:  
weighting said constraints to provide a match score.

10 22. (previously presented) The method of Claim 19, said step of providing said  
report comprising the steps of:  
matching between at least a matchfield of said goal and a corresponding  
matchfield of at least one of an affinity group and a user profile, and  
generating a match score.

15 23. (original) The method of Claim 22, further comprising the step of:  
determining at least one best match from a plurality of possible matches.

20 24. (original) The method of Claim 23, further comprising the step of:  
arranging matches by order of match score, said order being grouped to at  
least two levels of matches, based on said score.

25 25. (original) The method of Claim 22, said step of matching further comprising  
the step of:

providing an aggregated score for said matching step; and  
weighting the importance of including said match in said report.

26. (previously presented) The method of Claim 24, said step of matching further  
comprising the step of:

30 classifying each match score as one of:

deterministic to meeting said goal; and  
non-deterministic to meeting said goal.

27. (original) The method of Claim 19, wherein said goal is any of:

5 a personal goal, wherein said personal goal is a result of a plurality of user inputs pertaining to personal aspirations; and

an external goal, wherein said external goal is a result of a plurality of arbitrary inputs.

10 28. (original) The method of Claim 27, wherein said aggregated information comprises statistical information.

29. (original) The method of Claim 27, wherein a report resulting from a personal goal comprises:

15 a comparison of a user having said user profile to at least one of:  
a plurality of user profiles; and  
an affinity group.

30. (currently amended) A computer implemented method for performing a  
20 compensation survey of a user plurality of users with an automatically user  
tailored series a sequence of questions that is automatically tailored per user,  
comprising the steps of:

25 ~~presenting at least one question from a collection of questions to said user, the user answers to said at least one question determining regardless of the order in which questions are presented, an affinity of said user to compensation within one or more affinity group, wherein each affinity group comprises a plurality of profiles, each of said profiles comprising a plurality of segments of questions and corresponding answers;~~

30 ~~creating for each of said users a corresponding user profile for said user if a profile does not exist for said user, otherwise accessing an existing profile for~~

5 said user, and adding said at least one question containing a tailored sequence of questions and corresponding answers to said user profile;

10 determining if a corresponding affinity group exists for said user profile and, if so associating said each user profile with at least one or more existing affinity groups, based on user's profile questions and corresponding answers, regardless of the order in which questions are presented, otherwise creating at least one new affinity group and, if an association between a said new affinity group created by associating a plurality of user profiles that include said user profile and said at least one affinity group does not exist, then creating at least one with each other, based on answers to questions provided in said user profiles and regardless of the order in which the questions are presented new affinity group for said user profile, each affinity group containing at least one user profile;

15 presenting each user with at least one a sequence of questions particular subsequent question from said collection a source containing a plurality of different questions, to said user, the selection of said sequence of questions at least one subsequent question, and order of each question in said sequence of questions being independently, asynchronously, and dynamically tailored for each and every user on an individual basis influenced and dynamically determined responsive to by both an answer received from each individual user to a question previously presented to said individual user and a particular affinity group or combination of affinity groups with which said user profile of said individual user is associated;

20 repeating the steps above until all appropriate questions of said collection of questions have been presented to and answered by said user; and

25 storing said user profile of said each user;

30 wherein said affinity group comprises at least one of:

profession:

compensation:

compensation range:

experience:

experience range;  
position; and  
position range.

5 31. (cancelled)

32. (cancelled)

33. (cancelled)

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34. (cancelled)

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39. (cancelled)

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42. (cancelled)

43. (cancelled)

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44. (cancelled)

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47. (cancelled)

48. (original) The method of Claim 30, further comprising the step of:  
10 providing a compensation report.

49. (original) The method of Claim 48, said compensation report is constrained by  
at least one of:

an attribute of said user profile; and

15 a reporting goal.

50. (cancelled)

51. (original) The method of Claim 49, said goal comprising at least one of:  
20 a desired compensation;  
a desired range of compensation;  
a desired geographic location;  
a desired firm; and  
a desired range of firms.

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52. (cancelled)

53. (cancelled)

30 54. (cancelled)

55. (cancelled)

56. (cancelled)

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57. (original) The method of Claim 49, said goal comprising any of:

a personal goal, wherein said personal goal is a result of a plurality of user inputs pertaining to personal aspirations; and  
an external goal, wherein said external goal is a result of a plurality of arbitrary inputs.

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58. (original) The method of Claim 57, said personal goal comprising at least one of:

compensation;  
15 compensation range;  
salary;  
salary range;  
geographic location;  
position; and  
20 position range.

59. (Cancelled)

60. (previously presented) The method of Claim 59, wherein said statistical

25 information comprises at least one of:

average salary;  
median compensation;  
median salary;  
salary percentile;  
30 standard deviation;

trend;  
profile count;  
most frequent compensation; ands  
most frequent salary.

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61. (cancelled)

62. (original) The method of Claim 30, said compensation comprising at least one of:

10 annual salary;  
monthly salary;  
weekly salary;  
hourly rate;  
bonus;  
15 tip;  
benefits; and  
vacation time.

63. – 91. (cancelled)

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92. (currently amended) A computer implemented method for surveying a user plurality of users with a series sequence of questions that is automatically tailored to said per user, comprising the steps of:

25 presenting each user at least one sequence of questions that is independently, asynchronous, and dynamically tailored for each and every user of the plurality of users on an individual basis from a collection source containing a plurality of different questions to said user, the each user's answers to each of said at least one sequence of questions from a collection of questions determining, an affinity of said user to compensation within one or more affinity groups, wherein

30 each affinity group comprises a plurality of user profiles;

receiving answers from each said user;

storing said ~~at least one sequence of questions~~ and said corresponding answers in a unique user profile for each user;

determining if a corresponding affinity group exists for said user profile and,

5 if so, associating said user profile with at least one or more affinity groups, based on ~~said user's profile questions and corresponding answers~~, otherwise creating at least one new affinity group and associating said user profile with said new affinity group;

filtering said user profile, wherein said filtering comprises the application of

10 a rules engine that compares said user profile to a set of predefined criteria;

modifying an answer if it is inconsistent with at least one of:

    said user profile; and

    said affinity group;

15     wherein determining an appropriate next question ~~from~~ for said collection sequence of questions to be presented to said user on an individual basis, said appropriate next question, and ~~therefore~~ the a specific order in which said segment sequence of said questions are presented to each said user, being determined on an individual, user-by-user basis based on at least a particular affinity group or combination of affinity groups to which said user profile is

20 associated and an answer to a previously presented question; and

repeating the foregoing steps until a full profile is established.

93. (previously presented) The method of claim 92, further comprising the steps of:

25     at least periodically checking all user profiles; and

    attempting to generate at least an affinity group, wherein said affinity group comprises at least a user profile.

94. (cancelled)

95. (cancelled)

96. (currently amended) The method of Claim 92, wherein ~~said appropriatea~~ next question in said sequence of questions is determined based on at least one of:

5 popularity of said question within said particular affinity group or combination of said affinity groups;

a most frequently answered question within said particular affinity group or combination of said affinity groups; and

10 a most recently answered question within said particular affinity group or combination of said affinity groups; and

15 in relation to said question.

97. (original) The method of Claim 94, further comprising the step of:

querying any of a database of a plurality of user profiles and a database of 15 a plurality of affinity groups for a statistical report.

98. (previously presented) The method of Claim 97, wherein said statistical report comprises at least one of:

20 average salary;

median compensation;

median salary;

salary percentile;

standard deviation;

25 trend;

profile count;

most frequent compensation; and

most frequent salary.

99. (cancelled)

100. (cancelled)

101. (cancelled)

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103. (cancelled)

104. (cancelled)

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105. (cancelled)

106. (cancelled)

15 107. (cancelled)

108. (cancelled)

109. (cancelled)

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110. (cancelled)